

SASSI-PUNNU

As featured in Dasam Granth

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Indra, principal god of Swarg-Loka, Empyrean Kingdom—who enjoys social and special and characteristic mention in Vedas and Puraanas and owns a prestigious principality there, abounding in Gandharvas (Heavenly musicians), Ganakas (Heavenly danseuses and Apsaras) dancers and Nymphs and whose Swarg-Loka swayed ancient Greek prophets to build their Empyrean Kingdom (of pure fire and light); Lord Buddha to construct his Sukhavati; Saint John to give to Christianity his "The Revelations"; and which induced Islamic Bahisht inhabiting (Houris and Chirmaam) Fairies and slaves for the Jannatis, and being ever apprehensive of his Indra Singhaasan being snatched by some Rishi or Muni, deputed his aesthetically unsurpassed Apsara Rambha to descend down to Bhoo-Loka—our Earth—to vitiate Maharishi Kapil Muni's tapassey-Mujaheda or exercise in self-mortification, the consummation of which might dislodge Indra from his godly sovereignty of the heavens.

Rambha succeeded in her sexual mission which resulted in the birth of a female child. On the fulfilment of her well laid sinister mission she ascended back to her godly abode; after floating the new born girl over the waters of the Sindhu, apparently washing her sins clean. Yet conscientiously or unconscientiously laying unholy guidelines for mankind for similar nefarious acts and generating hatred and denigrating value and sanctity of girl child till this day.

The portrayal covers chands 1 to 51 of Chritra 108, covering pages 954-958. Total number of Tereya Chriters—Character portrayal of "Women's virtues and wiles," comprise 404 Chritras covered pages 809 to 1359 and chands 1319 to 7181.

Dasam Granth which enshrines these Chritras, Puranic Gaathas and some sacred utterances of Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708 A.D.), tenth Guru of the Sikh faith, is the production of the Guru himself and some of his redoubtable court poets composed in unsurpassed gripping lyrical poetry in chaste Braj laced profusely with apt Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian and folk terminology covering 1428 pages.

The present portrayal begins:—

*Aeik divas Sri Kapil Mun than keeyo peyaan
Haer Apsra bass bheyo so tum suno sujaan*

One day Kapil Muni vended to a place
Where finding a Nymph, to her he lost his grace;
How was this? Listen ye men of wisdom.

*Rambha Naam Apsra Takoo Roop Nihaar
Muni ko giryō turat hee beeraj bhoom majhzaar*

Beholding Rambha's charming worth
Muni lost his semen into the earth.

*Gireyo rait muni ko jabey Rambha raheyo adhaan
Daar Sarita Sindhu tisao surpur kareyo pepaan.*

When Muni's seaman dropped aright
Therewith Rambha had conceived,
Floating the child into the Sindhu
She fled to Indra's abode ungrieved.

The floating child fell to the gaze of Brahma Dutta, king of Sindh. He rescued and reared her as his own princess. Since her aesthetic charm and beauty paralleled that of the Moon, Brahma Dutt named her Sassi (Sanskrit Moon) and in parental affection always accosted her as Sassia.

With her dove like eyes framed in black lashes and brows and physical charms she:—

Jeet lapee Sassi kee kala yaatay Sassia naam

She had won the Moon's glory
Thus Sassia was she named.

As she attained to her nubility Brahma Dutt searched for an equally graceful groom for her. His royal selection fell on Prince Punnu of the neighbouring kingdom. Prince Punnu was invited and Sassia with full regal pageant and glory was given away to him in wedlock.

*Dhool mirdang bajay sabh hee ghar
Yau pur aaj kuhlalal bhaari,
Gaavat geet bajaavat taari
Devaavat aavat naagar gaari,
Bhairi hazaar bajee eik baar
Maha chhibyaar hansay mil naari,
Deh assees kpnea dsehejg
Ehe joori jeyo jag chaar tuhaari.*

Drums, mirdangs in all homes did sound
Township entire was in super—happiness bound,
Singing songs and clasping their hand
The village belle thronged mouthing word unbland:
Thousands of flutes blew in one high yell
In super-charm guffawed the township belle;
The king waving his blessings did pour
"May thy couple happily live ages four."

Punnu had a wedded queen from his earlier marriage and a son too. She could not hear Punnu's super-infatuation for newly-wed Sassia and Punnu's total disregard for her. She was very unhappy:—

*Beyaah bheyo jab hi eh squ
Fab baat suni nrup kee bar naari,
Chaunk rahee at hi chit meih
Kachhu aur hutī ab aur bechaari,
Mantra kare likh jantra ghaney
Ab tantkan seo eh baat sudhaari
Laagi uchaat rahey chit meli
Kabhun na suhaaeye peeya ko pyaari*

Qhen Punnu's elder wife
Of the new wedding heard,
She startled in mind and said
"Else had happened, else I wished".
She recited mantras and jantras galore
To redress the wrong with tantra more,
She distraught now in mind lived
As if never by her Lord loved.

The elder queen hearing all tales of Punnu's infatuation for his newly-wed, she came to the town and witnessed Sassia

*Rein divas taa seyo rat maaney
Praanan tay peyaaro pahchaney
Laagi rahat tavan kay ur so
Jasay bhaant maakhikaa gur so.*

Nights and days his bed she doth share
His love over her breaths she doth tare,
To his breast she doth embrace
As a fly to the bole of Jaggery doth lace.

Incensed at love rivalry, and singed with love jealousy; no less than a suicidal emotion in man or women; the elder queen resolved to make a short shrift of Punnu, her own wedded and loving husband and cooked a plan of assassination while shunting in a far off forest and crown her own son as the king instead.

*Janmay kuaar baab kay rahi
Hoeye birakat mekhli gahi
Ghaat aapnaey pati ko karhaun
Sout kay ehhtar sees par dharhaun*

Unmarried I lived in father's home
Resigning life I shall khirqa don
I shall slay my husband own
My son's head I shall thus crown.

*Jan grahay chhor tirath neh gayee
Maano rahat chandra brat bhaeye
Ya souhaag tay raanday neeki
Yaake lagat raajeshwari pheeki*

Leaving my living home solace
I did even visit to pilgrim place,
As if breathing there sustained
On Moonday fasts I remained.
It is better own a widowed life
Hereafter than a married pale,
Its sovereignty hath no kin for me
It hath turned all sour and stale.

She announced her perfidious plan:

*Khilat akhetak jo hanay
Hamray pati ko koeay,
Tay soun kay Sassia marey
Jeyat na bachehay soyay*

If while in forest ahunt
Someone slays my lord
Hearing Sassia breaths no more
Instantly breaks her life's cord.

As Punnu's life reached its end:—

*Taako kaal niket jab aaeyo
Punnu Shah seekaar sidhaaeyo
Jab ghehray ban beech sidhaaeyo
Tan dhan baan satru tab maareyo
Lagat teer heer ris bhareyo
Turey wadhaaeye ghaat tin kareyo
Taako maar aap pune mareyo
Sur pur maanjh peaa no kareyo*

Singed in wrath, as the arrow struck
Up he pulled the steed and slayed by hand
Slaying his victim, he killed himself
And gods—home he made his land.

*Aiso haal chaakran bheyo
Janak dhani nirdhani hoeve gaeyo
Nrip day kaha dhaam ham jay hain
Kaha raaneyeean baktar dekheye hain.*

The servitors were in a state of pain
The rightly lord has reduced to a grain
Should his mortal coil be taken to home
Or the royal armours to queens be shown?

*Nabh baani tin kau tab bhaeye
Bhrit sudha tumaari kahan gaeye,
Jodha bado juojh jeh jaayaye
Ran chhit tay teh kaun ughaaveye.*

A voice from the Void had said
Ye servitors where hath thy wisdom fled?
A warrior great where battling doth die
On battle ground, he remain doth lie.

*Taantay Yaaki Qabar Khan
Gaado eihein banaaeye,
Asava bastar laye jaao ghar
Deho sandeso jaaeye.*

Thus digging here his grave
Bury well his mortal remains,
Take his steed and armours home
Convey ill-tidings perturient pains.

Baani soun gaadeo tisay

*Bheye pawn bhrit baise,
Asava bastra leye laal kay
Baaleyeh deeyo sandes,*

Hearing the Voice they buried the mortal coil
Swift like the wind, they flew to the palace royal
Steed and robes of the youth of loving mane
Gave with ill-news to the youthful queen.

*Baithee Baal jahaan bad bhaagee
Chit chore kee chitwan laagee,
Tab lau khabar chaakran dayee
Arun hutee peyeeri hovay gayee.*

With "luck thus high" the lady royal where she sat
She felt as if her heart had been thieved,
Quickly, ill-tidings she to her servants sent
Her face turned pale, from rosy charming red.

In her painful state Sassia immediately flew (in babaan) to the site of the grave. It simply bewildered her. Bewailing and crying she opened the grave. Jumping in she clung to the corpse of her lord and blew her breaths out never to return. It was her eternal Rechak Yoga. The learned poet sings for her chivalric deed:—

*Maran sabhan kay moond paye
Soffal maran haiy taahain,
Tanak bikheye tan ko tajaye
Peeya soun preet banaaeye.*

Death hovers on all heads
Successful death hath she,
Body in a moment deserts
Clings to her beloved he.
The poet philosophies the death:—

*Pawan pawan, aanal anal,
Nabh nabh, bhoo bhoo sang,
Jal jal kay sang mil baheyo,
Tan peeya kay sarbang.*

As air to air, fire to fire,
Space to space, earth to earth;
And water in water doth mingle
She in her lord's body doth jumble.

*Peeya hit deh tawan treya dayee
Dev lok bheetar laye gayee,
Ardh aasan baasav tek deeno
Bhaant bhaant soun aadar keeno,*

For the sake of his dearly loved
That woman her life did stake,
And unto the region of gods
With her his soul she did take.
Indra shared half his throne
Diverse welcomes to boot were shown.
Spiritually Separated

*Macchhari aur birheen kay
Badh ko kaha upaaveye,
Jal peeya tay bichheraaye yeh
Tank bikheye mar jaaeye.*

What leads a fish and Birheen's death
Sundered from water and the beloved,
Immediately, in an eye's blink
They blow off their life's breath.

*Paap narak tay na daree
Kari savat kee kaane
At chit kope badhaae kay
Peeyaa lagwaaeyo baan*

Dreaded nought the hellish sin
She got her lord missiled
And flying in violent wrath
Got him with an arrow killed.

Thus the great Guru—The True Enlightener—has bequeathed to the posterity a parable that imparts a lesson illustrating two facets of the unsumountable innate human emotions of love and hate symbolising two royal women; one pregnant with divine love for her sedded man to the extent of dying for him selflessly when knowing him to be no more in life while the other brings the death of her wedded man to quench her fire of rivalry and jealousy. To add this, it exhibits the act of disloyalty of the servants, even in the royal household for mere the worldly lucure.

It is reminiscent of Maharani Kaikeye of the divine royal household of Ayodhya, how burnt with jealousy she prevailed upon her royal husband untimely for the banishment of Shri Rama for fourteen years and crown her own son, from the same father, Bharat on the same throne. Equally it reminds how Padmavati blew her breaths off even on the false tidings of her divine husband Bhagat Jeyadeva having been mauled by a tiger in the forest.

We very often debate on the whether the entire Baani composition of the Dassam Granth is Guru Baani or otherwise. Dassam Granth was built up as such by Bhai Mani Singhji after the demise of the Tenth Master. However, Guru Gobind Singh did not built Khalsa as renunciates or simply sants but it is fully militarised household of intellectualists whose womenhood plays parallel party of virtues and vices of one another. Dassam Granth compositions equally describes parts men play in normal life. Though some parts of the Baani an convergent to passionate life yet wisely read, it imparts abundance of guidelines for caution against pitfall sin life. Being couched in Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian and Braj bhaashas it reading is difficult and now that in Sikh circles what to say of Persian, even Urdu is out, even the university doyens, many of them, know nothing of Dassam Granth Baani. It is ridiculous that Hazoor Sahib Management who only more than regularly performs Akhandpaaths of Dassam Granth Baani charges (1500-5001) three times the Bheta of the Akhandpaath of Adi Granth, a pure commercialisation devoid of any sanctity. Why a show of Akhandpaath, beguility it to be sacred, yet commercialisation and a doubt who read it understand it and safely swim over the ocean.

Only Abchalwaala Sahib knows, what Punnuya reaches the money household traders in faith.

Our Keertanias and Pulpitowner in their of repeated harangues sing Bhai Gurdas undernoted Vaar devotedly but hardly ever unfold to the audience the lid of spiritual and literary heritage Guru Gobind Singhji has left for us in the Dassam Granth.

*Laila Majnu aashki chaun chakki jaati
Sorth Beeja gaaveye jas sugra vaasi
Sassi Punnu dosti, hoveye jaat ajjati
Mahenwaal noun Sohoni nay tardi raati
Peer mureeda pirhari gaavay probhaati*

Laila and Majnu were lovers known in corners four
Sorth and Beeja are praised for their devoted lore
Sassi and Punnu were lovers, the two fused in one
Sohni to embrace Mahinwaal, nightly swam over the stream
Ranjha and Heer are sung for their traditional love unbound
Devotion of Gurus and Chelas is sung in early morning round.